



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Kansas Solid Waste Management Plan

#### BACKGROUND

In December 1996, the secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) adopted the first comprehensive state solid waste management plan. K.S.A. 65-3406 directed KDHE to prepare this plan; however, no specific statutory guidance was given regarding the plan content. Despite the lack of guidance, KDHE believed the state plan should be consistent with the philosophy set forth in the complete body of solid waste laws. Embodied in the comprehensive set of laws are several important concepts, some of which distinguish Kansas from most other states. KDHE developed the 1996 plan based upon those concepts and significant input received from interested citizens and persons with solid waste management experience and responsibilities.

The fundamental concepts taken from state law which influenced the original solid waste plan and which continue to serve as the basis for this updated plan include:

- ! The protection of the health and welfare of the citizens of Kansas requires the safe and sanitary disposal of solid waste.
- ! The state should work cooperatively with local governments to facilitate the

development of environmentally sound and cost effective methods for managing and reducing solid waste.

- ! KDHE should maintain the resources and proper approvals from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to fully administer all solid waste regulatory programs in lieu of greater federal involvement in this area.
- ! All solid waste processing and disposal facilities should be subject to state permitting and operational regulations so that environmental impacts will be minimized.
- ! Major solid waste management decisions should be made at the local level as demonstrated by the comprehensive local planning and land-use responsibility and authority granted to counties.
- ! KDHE should administer programs to provide technical training, public education, and grants to improve solid waste management practices and decision-making by local government officials, private businesses, and all citizens.

The 1996 Kansas Solid Waste Management Plan established a schedule for updating the plan in 2000. A public meeting was held in Wichita on June 20 to discuss options for updating the plan to meet current and anticipated needs. A specific goal of the meeting was to discuss how to make the plan more useful to local solid waste planners, waste service providers (public and private), and elected officials. KDHE presented information at the public meeting summarizing current solid waste management practices and state resources. Excellent public feedback was received on the desired content and format of the updated plan.

### **LOCAL DECISION-MAKING**

The 1996 Kansas plan as well as this updated plan emphasize the importance of local decision-making in solid waste planning. While the majority of Kansans appear to support this philosophy, some people have stated their preference for statewide goal setting and even mandates, such as banning the landfilling of yard waste. KDHE has continuously taken the position that local decision-making and goal setting is preferred in Kansas. Two primary reasons include: (1) current laws authorize counties to independently prepare comprehensive solid waste management plans; and, (2) Kansas is a very diverse state with respect to population density, rainfall, waste stream composition, and available resources at the local level. This diversity makes it inappropriate to set statewide goals. What is feasible in urban counties with substantial resources and a large population base may not be possible in rural counties with fewer people and resources. Waste stream composition may also differ significantly in the urban areas as compared to rural counties with few cities and low rainfall. For example, yard waste may be a significant waste stream in some counties and very minor in others. Thus, a yard waste landfill ban may have the potential to reduce landfilled waste quantities by a high percentage in some counties but make little impact in other counties.

Most local planners and government officials have been pleased with the state's position related to local decision-making. While certain minimum standards must be satisfied by every county in their plan and in the ways they manage their waste, counties have considerable flexibility in many areas. An important area of flexibility is the county's selection of an overall waste management system. Counties can choose to operate a landfill or a transfer station (the two most common options), or they can choose an alternative approach such as an incinerator, a material recovery facility (i.e., a MRF), or another waste processing system, like municipal solid waste (MSW) composting. Counties can also decide what types of waste reduction methods are technically and economically feasible given their unique characteristics. Counties must balance numerous needs of their citizens ranging from medical services or police and fire protection to environmental protection. The Kansas approach allows counties to consider all factors and make waste management decisions which meet minimum environmental requirements while not jeopardizing overall public health and welfare.

### **CHANGES TO THE UPDATED PLAN**

This plan is a major update to the 1996 Kansas Solid Waste Management Plan, at least with respect to appearance. Changes in technical content or state policies are minor. The emphasis on local decision-making has been retained and most statewide goals and objectives have been carried over into this plan with appropriate updates, clarifications, and extensions.

The 1996 plan was a very comprehensive document which included a large volume of information. Both KDHE and the public decided that the state plan would be more usable if it was revised to be more concise and focused. Some important changes from the 1996 plan include:

- (1) The 2000 plan is much shorter in length because it includes less background information and data in appendices.
- (2) The 2000 plan focuses on state goals and objectives and less on the responsibilities of local governments which have their own separate county or regional plans.
- (3) State responsibilities are now presented as “objectives” with schedules provided when appropriate. The 1996 plan listed “recommendations.”
- (4) The 2000 plan points readers to supplementary references rather than provide all needed information in one comprehensive document.

As the volume of solid waste information grows, it is becoming necessary to establish focused reference documents rather than try to include all important facts and data in one document. To supplement this plan, KDHE will continue to prepare such documents and publicize their availability. Some information which will be included in supplementary documents include:

- ! Waste composition studies for Kansas cities and counties and other similar geographic areas
- ! Decision-making models for local solid waste planners
- ! Technical guidance documents for waste generators and service providers
- ! Lists of all permitted solid waste facilities
- ! Solid waste facility operator guides
- ! Public education materials
- ! Grant information and awards

## SCOPE OF 2000 STATE SOLID WASTE PLAN

This plan is designed to cover a five-year period (2001 through 2005); however, goals and objectives were established with a much longer

time frame in mind. The “five year” period should be considered as a pre-determined schedule for performing the next comprehensive review and update. Although KDHE will examine the adequacy of the state plan on an annual basis, no planned update will occur until 2005 unless there are major new developments or needs in solid waste management.

This plan establishes 10 solid waste goals which define areas of need and focus over the next five years and probably much longer into the future. Under each goal several objectives have been established. Most objectives are tasks for KDHE staff; however, some identify responsibilities of other entities involved in waste management. By implementing these goals and objectives now, short- and long-term benefits can be realized. Many of the goals and objectives in this plan will likely be maintained when the plan is updated in 2005. Chapter 6 provides a detailed review of updated goals and objectives.

Although the goals and objectives comprise the most important aspect of this plan, other information is presented which may be of value to solid waste planners and service providers. **Appendix A** focuses on “partnerships”, which is currently being emphasized in Kansas to maximize resources and establish effective local and regional waste management programs. Chapter 6 provides a realistic vision of where we would like Kansas to be with respect to waste management practices at two points in time – 2005 and 2010. Because the “vision” assumes success in the completion of goals, the department should plan and act in ways which seek to reach the conditions set forth under these future scenarios. Other information is included on current waste management practices (Chapter 3), state programs and resources (Chapter 4), and the status of statewide activities to carry out the recommendations included in the 1996 plan (Chapter 2).